

Chapter 26 of the 1689 Confession of Faith: “Of The Church”,
Session # 11, “Christ’s Kingdom and Covenant of Grace”, Presented by
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on February 25th, 2018.

The 1689 Confession, Chapter 26: “Of the Church”

Paragraph 3 will once again be our focus today –

3. The purest churches under heaven are subject to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan; nevertheless Christ always hath had, and ever shall have a kingdom in this world, to the end thereof, of such as believe in him, and make profession of his name.

(d) 1st Corinthians 5; Revelation 2-3; (e) Revelation 18: 2; 2nd Thessalonians 2: 11-12; (f) Matthew 16: 18;

Psalm 72: 17; 102: 28; Revelation 12: 17

Luke 22: 28-32 – “But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

1. We see here, first of all, that the Father bestowed a kingdom upon Christ.

Now, I want to attempt to show you that there are two great and distinct aspects of the one kingdom of God which are being talked about here in these verses; first, the kingdom which was given by the Father to Christ; that kingdom which was of the appointment of the Father to Christ. (The Father bestowed this kingdom upon Christ) Christ, in eternity past, was appointed by the Father as the Mediator of the Everlasting Covenant. He would become the Mediator in the actuality of time and space, by His Incarnation; His taking upon Himself a true human nature without sin, and as the God-Man, He would live out His life doing the will of the Father in order that all of the commandments of God and all of His will would be done on behalf of all of us sinners who need a Savior. This appointment or bestowing of a kingdom upon Christ, by the Father, was planned and agree upon between the Persons of the Divine Godhead in the Covenant of Redemption in the counsels of eternity. In the history of the World and the History of the Church, Christ’s kingdom is set up by steps and in stages in relation to this all-important Covenant.

a. This Mediatorial kingdom which was planned for in the appointment of Christ in eternity past, was then set up in the days of the kings of the World Monarchies which are mentioned in **Daniel chapter 2, and verse 44** – “And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever.” “Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold – the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this.” “The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure.” So, we see here Christ’s Mediatorial kingdom was set up in the days of the Roman empire, in the days of the Herods. This is the first reason that Christ shall always have a kingdom in this world, to the end of it, because it is prophesied that it shall be so.

2. What does it mean, then, when Jesus says that He will bestow a kingdom on His apostles?

Matthew 16: 19 – “And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

This statement by Jesus means that He would bestow the kingdom of the New Testament visible Church upon them. He would, in giving them the keys of that kingdom, allow them to open up the entrance to the Kingdom of grace and glory which is visibly seen in the Church (more particularly in local churches), composed of believers who have covenanted with Christ by faith to receive grace and all the blessings of salvation, leading to eternal glory; and that they will join with that local church which they can identify with, in doctrine and practice. This kingdom; that is, the rule and reign of Christ over and in His churches will endure through all the generations until Christ returns. And all the doctrine and truth necessary for the church to be taught and governed by Christ would be entrusted to the apostles and written down for us in the Scriptures. The Church would be taught by Christ through their word; the words of apostolic teaching as they are found in the Bible; not to the exclusion of the rest of the Scriptures, but in order to explain them more thoroughly.

And so, we see that the gospel which Christ gave to them to preach is what leads all men everywhere to consider the kingdom of grace, this kingdom of Christ bestowed upon His apostles, and the Church through their preaching and writing down of the word of God, will in accordance with the Spirit's working according to the purpose of God, continue to the end of the world. **There is the kingdom which the Father bestowed upon Christ in the covenant of redemption. And then there is the kingdom of grace which Christ bestows upon the apostles; His giving them instructions on how to accomplish the gathering of all the Elect persons that He has been given by the Father in the covenant of redemption.** The Covenant of Grace is distinctly different from the Covenant of Redemption in regard to the parties involved and the conditions met by them. In the Covenant of Redemption Christ meets all the conditions of the Father in His agreeing to undertake the work of Redemption and fulfill all the conditions by means of His righteous acts alone; that is, His righteous acts of complete obedience to God's law, and suffering the penalty for all the sins of God's elect. In the Covenant of Grace, Christ appoints His apostles to use the keys of the kingdom through the preaching of the gospel, to gather in those persons who will covenant with Christ, the will believe in Christ, in order to be justified and to obtain all the blessings of salvation by faith in what Christ has already accomplished on their behalf.

Jonathan Edwards says this on Luke 22: 29 in Entry 1091 of “The Miscellanies”, Vol. 20, P. 477-479 – “So that although undoubtedly, besides the marriage covenant between Christ and his church, there is a covenant that God the Father makes with believers, of which Jesus Christ is the Mediator, yet this covenant is in no wise properly a distinct covenant from the covenant God makes with Christ himself, as the believers' head and surety, and that he made with him before the world was. (that is – the Covenant of Redemption) God the Father makes no covenant and enters into no treaty with fallen men distinctly, by themselves. He will transact with them, in such a friendly way, no other way than by and in Christ Jesus, as members and as it were parts of him. The friendliness and favor shall not be to them in their own name, but it shall all be to Christ, and all acts of friendship and favor shall be to him, and all promises made

to him, and the fulfillment of promises also shall be to him, and to believers only as being in Him, and under the covert of His name, and as being beheld and reckoned as parts of him.”

“But the covenant between Christ himself and his church, by virtue of which she is united to him, is interested [in] him, and becomes his spouse and his mystical body, is an entirely distinct thing. And this is the covenant by which Christ's disciples become interested in that eternal life and kingdom, which God the Father did by covenant make over to Christ as a public person, agreeable to those words of our Savior to the disciples, **Luke 22:29**, "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me." The words in the original are literally translated thus, "I, by covenant, dispose (or make over) unto you, as my Father, by covenant, hath disposed unto me a kingdom."

He says: “The due consideration of these things may perhaps reconcile the difference between those divines that think [the covenant of redemption] and the covenant of grace the same, and those that think them different. The covenant that God the Father makes with believers is indeed the very same with the covenant of redemption made with Christ before the foundation of the world, or at least is entirely included in it. And this covenant has a mediator, or is "ordained in the hand of a mediator" [Galatians 3:19]. But the covenant by which Christ himself and believers are united, one with another, is properly a different covenant than that, and is not made by a mediator. There is a mediator between sinners and the Father to bring about a covenant union between them, but there is no mediator between Christ and sinners to bring about a marriage union between Christ and their souls.”

These things may also tend to reconcile the difference between those divines that [think] the covenant of grace is not conditional as to us or that the promises of it are without any proper conditions to be performed by us, and those that think that faith is the proper condition of the covenant of grace. The covenant of grace, if thereby we understand the covenant between God the Father and believers in Christ, the covenant that he "ordains in the hand of [a] mediator," and the promises given us in him, is indeed without any proper conditions to be performed by us. Faith is not properly the condition of this covenant, but the righteousness of Christ. Faith is no more properly the condition of this covenant made with the second Adam, for himself and believers in him, than a coming into being by descent from Adam would properly have been the condition of the covenant God made with Adam, and the promises made to his posterity in him. Adam's righteousness was the alone proper condition, not only of Adam's eternal life but of his posterity's, according to the tenor of that covenant. So Christ's righteousness is the alone proper condition of eternal life to the second Adam and his spiritual seed, according to the tenor of the new covenant made with him.”

“But the covenant of grace, if thereby we understand the covenant between Christ himself and his Church or His members, is conditional as to us: the proper condition of it, which is a yielding to Christ's wooings and accepting his offers and closing with Him as a Redeemer and spiritual Husband, is to be performed by us. A proper condition of a covenant is that qualification or act of the party with whom the covenant is made by which, according [to] the tenor of the covenant, the party is interested in the benefits therein promised. But the party with whom God the Father, as supreme Lord, ruler and disposer of all, makes his covenant in favor of fallen men is Christ mystical, containing both head and members, and will have nothing to do in any such friendly transaction with fallen men any otherwise but as in and under Christ, and considered as one party with him. But that in this party by which alone, according to the tenor of the covenant, the party, both head and members, is interested in eternal life is Christ's righteousness. But in

the covenant between Christ and His members or spouse, she is by herself a party in the covenant, and that in this party by which alone, according to the tenor of the covenant, she is interested in the benefit of union and propriety in Christ (which is the benefit directly conveyed in this covenant) is her believing in Christ, or her soul's active union with him.”

Edwards also says in Vol. 20, Entry 1064, P. 445. COVENANT OF GRACE –

“That the parties covenanting in the covenant of grace are Christ and his church, or spiritual spouse, is manifest from that this covenant is called a testament in Scripture, and compared to a will that is confirmed by the death of the testator. Now the testator that died was Christ, and not God the Father. If the covenant of grace was His will and testament to his church, then Christ and the church are the parties contracting. “That the parties contracting in the covenant of redemption are the Father and the Son, but the parties contracting in the covenant of grace, Christ and believers, is what seems to be taught in that **Luke 22:29**, "καγω διατιθεμαι υμιν καθως διεθετο μοι ο πατηρ μου βασιλειαν, **I do by covenant dispose unto you a kingdom, as my father by covenant disposed unto me.**” “For the word διατιθεμαι properly signifies to covenant, or make a contract or testament, or to appoint or dispose by covenant or testament. This is the word used, in Acts 3: 25, "Ye are the children of the prophets and of the covenant which God made (διαθησομαι) with our fathers." So Hebrews 8:10, "This is the covenant I will make (διαθησομαι) with the house of Israel." Therefore, the noun διαθηκη that comes of this verb signifies covenant, which is the word translated "covenant" in the New Testament.

So, to conclude – Christ’s Mediatorial Kingdom was bestowed upon Him by the Father in the Covenant of Redemption before the world began. The fulfillment of this covenant was entirely resting upon Christ and His righteousness. But the application of redemption and the gathering of sinners into this Kingdom takes place through the preaching of the gospel and by the actual use of the keys of the kingdom which given to the apostles and to subsequent ministers of Christ (pastor-teachers) who then began, and continued, to build upon the foundation of Christ’s Mediatorial finished work. Therefore, we should understand that each sinner who believes in the truth of the gospel is covenanting with Christ personally; that is, they are giving themselves to believe in the gospel and to take Jesus as their only Savior and Lord. They are then saved and brought into the Universal Church, having met the conditions of the gospel, and the conditions for entrance into the local church that they will join, which are – Repenting of their sins, and believing in the message of the gospel.